

## Socio-Economics

### **Existing Condition (No Action Alternative)**

#### Property Values

Figures used were based on U.S. Census Bureau Data. The median value of a housing unit in San Miguel County in 2012 was \$489,800, more than double the state average of \$236,800 (U.S. Census Bureau). Personal and resource values associated with open spaces, public land or desire for growth and development will continue.

#### Development Potential

Analysis has been conducted by San Miguel County Planning Department in compliance with County zoning laws (San Miguel County March 2014 letter). The Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F) Zone District and the High Country Area (HCA) Zone District both require a 35 acre minimum lot size for each development right unless the parcel is a pre-existing, non-conforming parcel created before 1972 that is less than 35-acres. San Miguel County is unaware of any subject properties less than 35 acres in size involved in the land exchange. The San Miguel County Planner included the parcels that may not be conveyed to provide for equal values in his calculations.

Pre-Exchange the private parcels have 16 development rights. These are summarized below:

- *Skyline Ranch Trust:* Both parcels 1 & 2 are zoned Low Density (LD). The LD zone district is a 35-acre minimum parcel size by right with one development right. The LD zone district is a district that allows a property owner to apply for a Planned Unit Development through a 5-step review process that would potentially allow one unit per 7 acres although an applicant is not entitled automatically to the maximum density allowed in the zone district in which the land is located. Parcel 1, 113.04 acres, has three development rights and an existing residence. Parcel 2, 33.84 acres, has one development right and an existing residence (this is less than a 35-acre parcel through a Board of Commission approval BOCC Resolution 2009-15). The Skyline Ranch Trust parcel does have a Conservation Easement on a portion of the property held by the Nature Conservancy.
- *Alta Lakes LLC Parcels:* Alta Lakes Parcels has 400 acres zoned Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F) with 11 potential home sites and 140 acres zoned High Country Area (HCA) with 4 potential home sites
- *Wilson Mesa Parcel:* Wilson Mesa has 40 acres zoned Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F) - 1 development right.

#### Environmental Justice (EJ)

The Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 (February 1994) places attention on any adverse human health and environmental effects of agency actions that may disproportionately impact minority

and low-income populations. Low-income populations are households that live below the subsistence or poverty level as defined by local, state, or national government. The Order simultaneously directs Federal agencies to avoid making decisions that discriminate against these communities. Environmental justice means that to the greatest extent practicable and permitted by law, 1) populations are provided the opportunity to comment before decisions are rendered on, and 2) are allowed to share in the benefits of, are not excluded from and are not affected in a disproportionately high and adverse manner by government programs and activities affecting human health or the environment. For purposes of this section, minority and low income populations are defined as follows:

- Minority populations are persons of Hispanic or Latino origin of any race, Blacks or African Americans, American Indians or Alaska Natives, Asians, and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders.
- Low-income populations are persons living below the poverty level. In 2013, the poverty weighted average threshold for a family of four was \$23,550 and \$11,490 for an unrelated individual (U.S Health and Human Services, 2013).

The area of influence for the social and economic elements of this EA includes San Miguel County in west central Colorado. San Miguel County is the solo area of influence, because any changes in housing opportunities related to the land exchange would be concentrated here, not in Gunnison County where parcels involved in the exchange are already owned by Trust for Public Lands.

San Miguel County comprises 1,287 square miles with 5.7 people per square mile and a total population of 7,359 people in 2010 (estimated at 7,678 in 2013). San Miguel County population grew by 4.3% between 2000 and 2013.

The 2012 US Census data indicates that there were 6,610 housing units in San Miguel County, 3,250 of which were vacant. This corresponds to a vacancy rate of 49.2%. San Miguel County had a home ownership rate of 64.1%, less than the state average of 65.9%. Approximately 41.9% of the housing units are multi-unit structures (i.e., apartments, townhouses, etc.). From 2008-2012, there was a rental vacancy of 25.7% (nearly four times higher than the state average).

In 2013, approximately 12.6% of San Miguel County's residents were minorities and approximately 7.3 % of the population was living below the poverty level. Minority populations and low income populations in San Miguel County were significantly lower in than in the state of Colorado.

### **Environmental Consequences (Proposed Action and Alternative 2)** **Property Values**

The land exchange will have no impact on median house prices which are considered high. Personal and resource values associated with open spaces and public land or desire for growth and development will be maintained. Some lands involved within the land exchange will become public, available for multiple use management. Some of that will be managed as wilderness which will preclude future development. Other lands will remain private and available for development.

The Mais believe that loss of NF land adjacent to their property will adversely affect the value of their property. The Mais do not have exclusive use or access to National Forest Lands adjacent to their property. However, by being next to NFS lands, there is a certain amount of security that those lands won't be developed and providing a sense of space and separation from the intrusions of development. The Mais and proponents have been working on an agreement that protects their mutual interests. We believe both parties, in good faith, have resolved this issue; however we do not yet have a formal copy of the resolution.

#### Development Potential

Post-Exchange the private parcels would have 14 development rights, a net loss of 2 development rights. The Low Density zone district applies to parcels already so zoned and is not available for rezoning areas not currently so zoned, i.e. the trade parcels adjacent to the Skyline Ranch Trust would not be eligible for rezoning to the LD zone district. The following is a summary of zoning post-exchange:

- *Skyline Ranch Trust:* The following zoning would be in place post-exchange. Both parcels 1 & 2 zoned Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F). Parcel 1, 36 acres, will have 1 development right. Parcel 2, 136, will have 3 development rights
- *Alta Lakes LLC Parcels:* Parcel would be zoned Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F) & High Country Area (HCA). Alta Parcels, 338 acres, have 9 development rights if include HCA portion in total acres for development on the F zone portion.
- *Wilson Mesa Parcel:* Parcel will be zoned Forestry, Agriculture & Open (F). Forty-acre parcel has 1 development right

#### Environmental Justice (EJ)

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) requirements for identification of an EJ population have not been met and no EJ populations exist within the area of influence, and no impact analysis is required. The land exchange would have no impact on minority and low income populations nor will it result in a shortage of housing for these populations given the current vacancy rate in both owned and rented properties.

#### Cumulative effects

Property values will continue to be a combination of market factors and individual factors. Development is likely to continue within San Miguel County regardless of forest management activities. Low-income populations, while not an EJ population, will continue to struggle to purchase homes in San Miguel County due to the high cost of housing. They may be able to find housing in the rental market.